Message Text

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R 101440Z FEB 77 FM AMEMBASSY ROME TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2700 USMISSION NATO

CONFIDENTIAL ROME 2203

E.O. 11652: GDS TAGS: MILI, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN PROPOSAL: JOINT STAFF TALKS

- 1. COL GIUSEPPE D'AMBROSIO, DEPUTY IN POL/MIL DIRECTORATE, OFFICE OF CHIEF OF STAFF DEFENSE, CALLED ON EMBOFF TODAY TO INQUIRE AS TO STATUS ITALIAN INITIATIVE ON JOINT STAFF TALKS. D'AMBROSIO INDICATED ITALIANS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE FIRST SUCH SESSION AT WASHINGTON FOLLOWING JUNE NPG IN OTTAWA.
- 2. COL D'AMBROSIO WISHED TO EMPHASIZE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE WHICH THE ACCEPTANCE OF THESE ARRANGEMENTS HAVE, GIVEN THAT THE PROPOSAL ORIGINATED IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, WITH THE "FACE" OF BOTH THE JOINT CHIEFS AND THE MINISTER CLEARLY EXPOSED. HE SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE ITALIAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE U.S. WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO ENGAGE IN SUCH TALKS WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS LOW KEY AND "WITHOUT PUBLICITY."
- 3. THE EMBASSY FAVORS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS ADDED FORUM FOR PERIODIC DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE ITALIAN AND U.S. MILITARY. THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD IN OUR VIEW THAT THE INITIATION OF SUCH TALKS WILL BECOME A PUBLIC ISSUE. ON THE OTHER HAND PERIODIC CONSULTATIONS AT THE LEVEL INVISAGED WOULD WE BELIEVE PROVIDE USEFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO PRESENT U.S. VIEWS ON MANY SECURITY ISSUES CONFIDENTIAL

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OF COMMON INTEREST BEFORE MOD ATTITUDES ARE FIXED.

4. D'AMBROSIO ASKED THAT AN EARLY DECISION BE REACHED AS HIS OFFICE MUST MAKE ALL ARRANGEMENTS INCIDENT TO SUCH A MEETING WHICH IN TURN IS ASSOCIATED WITH PLANNING ALREADY UNDER WAY FOR THE OTTAWA NPG.

- 5. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, D'AMBROSIO, ASSERTED THAT "AS THE EMBASSY WAS AWARE" (IT WAS NOT, IN FACT) ITALY HAD OFFERED TO HOST THE NEXT NPG. THE GOI WAS THINKING ABOUT HOLDING THE MEETING AT BARI ON THE ADRIATIC COAST BOTH FOR EASE OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND, SUGGESTED D'AMBROSIO, BECAUSE THAT IS THE MINISTER'S HOME GROUND.
- 6. ACTION REQUESTED: OF THE DEPARTMENT; AN EARLY DECISION ON JOINT STAFF TALKS WHICH WE CAN PASS ON TO COLONEL D'AMBROSIO. OF USNATO; ANY INFORMATION ON ITALIAN INITIATIVES TO HOST THE NEXT NPG.BEAUDRY

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